

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 07722 111835Z POSS DUPE
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 L-03 ERDA-05 AID-05
CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EPG-02 EB-07 FPC-01 H-01
INR-07 INT-05 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PA-01 PRS-01
DLOS-09 NEAE-00 ERDE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 /129 W

-----111915Z 023054 /50

O R 111725Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4544
INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
SECDEF WASHDC
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
COMSIXTHFLT
EUCOM VAIHINGEN
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7722

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, PBOR, LY, IT, TS
SUBJ: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE:
SCARABEO IV MOVES OUT OF DISPUTED ZONE

REF: STATE 104430 AND PREVIOUS

1. MFA'S OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, MINISTER BARTOLOMEO ATTOLICO, INFORMED
EMBOFF THIS MORNING THAT A LIBYAN-ITALIAN "POLITICAL CRISIS"
IS PROBABLY ABREWING DUE TO ABRUPT DEPARTURE OF SCARABEO IV
FROM DRILLING SITE TO A POSITION SOME 10 MILES AWAY "OUTSIDE
THE DISPUTED ZONE". ACCORDING TO ATTOLICO, THE RIG "CUT IS
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ROPES" TO POSITIONING BUOYS ON MAY 10, AND WAS TUGGED AWAY.
WHETHER OWNER/OPERATOR ENI/SAIPEM HAD PRIOR CONCURRENCE FOR THE
MOVE FROM THE GOI IS, ACCORDING TO ATTOLICO, "SOMEWHAT IN
DOUBT". ACCORDING TO HIM, ENI CLAIMS TO HAVE HAD A GOI "GREEN
LIGHT", BUT FROM WHOM IS NOT CLEAR.

2. LARG, ACCORDING TO TELEPHONED REPORT FROM ITALIAN AMBASSADOR

IN TRIPOLI, IS FURIOUS AND IS "THREATENING TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS". NEVERTHELESS LIBYAN AMBASSADOR IN ROME HAS CONFIRMED AN EARLIER REQUEST FROM JALLUD TO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI HERE IN ROME ON MAY 12. WHETHER JALLUD AND/OR AMBASSADOR WERE AWARE OF SCARABEO'S MOVE WHEN APPOINTMENT REQUEST WAS CONFIRMED IS NOT CLEAR. WE GATHER LIBYAN REQUEST WILL BE HONORED BY ANDREOTTI.

3. ATTOLICO WAS PUZZLED AS TO THE RATIONALE AND TIMING OF THE ENI DECISION TO PULL OUT THE SCARABEO. HE CONSIDERED IT A MISTAKE, AND WOULD HAVE ARGUED AGAINST IT, HAD HE BEEN ASKED. INSTEAD, HE HAS BEEN STEADY ADVOCATE OF KEEPING SCARABEO ON SITE, HAVING ENI/SAIPEM SEEK A "SERIES" OF CONTRACTUAL OR SUB-CONTRACTUAL DRILLING CONTRACTS, AS WITH READING-BATES, TO DEMONSTRATE OVER TIME TO LARG THAT DRILLING IN THE DISPUTED AREA IS REALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR (BY THEN PROVEN) REASONS OF FORCE MAJEURE. ENI/SAIPEM HAD NOT ASKED MFA ADVICE BEFORE CONTRACTING WITH LIBYAN OIL COMPANY, AND MFA HAS BEEN TELLING ENI/SAIPEM TO KEEP THE PROBLEM CAST IN CONTRACTUAL, RATHER THEN POLITICAL, TERMS. EVEN SO, NOW THAT SCARABEO IS "OUT" ATTOLICO DOUBTED STRONGLY THAT MFA WOULD ATTEMPT TO GET IT TO RETURN TO SITE. AS TO "WHAT'S NEXT", ATTOLICO WOULD NOT SPECULATE. BUT HE CLEARLY FELT IT IS HATCH-BATTENING TIME, AT LEAST FOR A SPELL.

4. SOME LIGHT ON SCARABEO IV WITHDRAWAL WAS SHED BY ENI OFFICIAL WHO CONFIRMED MAY 11 TO EMBOFF THAT SCARABEO IV HAD UPPED ANCHOR NIGHT MAY 10 AND DEPARTED CONTESTED ZONE. WHILE WITHDRAWAL HAD NOT RPT NOT FORMALLY COORDINATED WITH NOC OR CONFIDENTIAL

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LARG, OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT ENI HAD MADE EVERY EFFORT TO ACQUAINT NOC AND LARG OF ITS PROBLEMS WITH MAINTAINING SCARABEO IV ON STATION AND HAD SIGNED ENI'S INTENTION TO WITHDRAW RIG. ENI OFFICIAL WAS UNWILLING TO FORECAST NATURE OF NOC OR LARG REACTION TO SCARABEO IV WITHDRAWAL, OTHER THAN TO NOTE THERE WOULD BE ONE AND TO EXPRESSING "HOPE" THAT IT WOULD NOT BE EXTREME. AS FOR TUNISIANS, ENI OFFICIAL SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE UNHAPPY NO MATTER WHAT. ASKED RE STATUS READING AND BATES, ENI OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THIS WAS PROPERLY MATTER BETWEEN READING AND BATES AND NOC BUT THAT ENI'S INFORMATION INDICATED THAT RIG WOULD ARRIVE IN ZONE ABOUT MAY 23. EMBOFF NOTED THAT USG HAD DELIVERED STIFF LETTER TO READING AND BATES RE ITS PARTICIPATION. COMMENT: LARG REACTION MAY DEPEND IN PART ON DEGREE TO WHICH ENI'S INTENTIONS TO LEAVE WERE CLEARLY PERCEIVED. IMPRESSION RECEIVED DURING CONVERSATION WERE (A) THAT ENI WAS ITSELF UNSURE WHETHER OR NOT NOC AND/OR LARG HAD CORRECTLY READ ITS SIGNALS AND (B) THAT EXACT TIME OF DEPARTURE WAS NOT RPT NOT COORDINATED WITH NOC OR LARG. END COMMENT.GARDNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ROME07722
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770166-0374
Format: TEL
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ISecure: 1
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, PBOR, LY, IT, TS
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